

# 2003 All-America City Award Application

We encourage applications from neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties and regions.

## Community Information

**Community name and state:**

Miami Beach, Florida

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**Your community is applying as a:**

\_\_\_ Neighborhood \_\_\_ Town XXX City \_\_\_ County \_\_\_ Region

**If applying as a region, name participating communities:**

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**If applying as a neighborhood, name city:**

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## Contact Information

**All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout entire competition and for follow-up):**

Name: Ramiro J. Inguanzo

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Title: Chief of Staff, Office of the City Manager

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Organization: City of Miami Beach, Florida

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Address: 1700 Convention Center Drive

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City, State, ZIP: Miami Beach, Florida 33139

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Phone (business/day): 305-673-7010

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Fax (business/day): 305-673-7782

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Phone (home/evening): 305-450-7146

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Fax (home/evening): n/a

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E-mail Address: ramiroinguanzo@miamibeachfl.gov

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**List the 3 individuals who most actively participated in filling out this All-America City Award application (add additional lines if needed):**

**[Provide name and title; organization; phone; e-mail address]**

Sidney and Faye Goldin, Neighborhood Leadership Academy Alumni Representatives, 305-866-2066

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Vivian Guzman, Miami Beach Neighborhood Services Director, 305-673-6749, vguzman@miamibeachfl.gov

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Ronnie Singer, Miami Beach CIP Community Information Manager, 305-673-6354, rsinger@miamibeachfl.gov

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The community applying will receive one complimentary membership (or a membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager, City of Miami Beach  
Address: 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
Phone Number: 305-673-7010 Fax 305-673-7782  
Email: jgonzalez@miamibeachfl.gov

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If we are designated an All-America City, we agree to follow NCL's rules (available on the webs ite) regarding use of the All-America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Jorge M. Gonzalez Title: City Manager

### Community Statistics

**Note:** Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (*source suggestions:* U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics)

POPULATION (in year 2000 or most recent): 87,933

Source/Date: U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1990-2000 (indicate + or -): -5 %

Source/Date: U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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### RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN (percentage):

White alone	<u>37.6</u> %
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	<u>53</u> %
Black or African American alone	<u>4</u> %
Asian alone	<u>1.4</u> %
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) alone	<u>n/a</u> %
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOP) alone	<u>n/a</u> %
Some other race alone	<u>n/a</u> %
Two or more races	<u>4</u> %

Source/Date: U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ 27,000

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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**PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL:** 21 %

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:** 7.4 %

**Source/Date:** Bureau of Labor Statistics / 2003

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**POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP** (*percentages, if available*):

19 years old and under	<u>10.5</u> %
20-24	<u>10.5</u> %
25-44	<u>39</u> %
45-64	<u>21</u> %
65 and over	<u>19</u> %

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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**PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP:** 36.6 %

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census Bureau / 2000

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**WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:**

<u>Hospitality Industry (Hotels/Restaurants)</u>	<u>46</u> %
<u>Retail Trade</u>	<u>34</u> %
<u>Hospitals / Health Care Industry</u>	<u>8.7</u> %

**Source/Date:** City of Miami Beach Economic Development Division / 2003

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## Part I: Community Background and Community Challenge Section

Add lines as needed for your responses

**1 (A). Community Background:** Set the background for your community. Tell its story. Summarize your community's history, successes and struggles. Describe how your community got to where it is today and your community's current state of affairs. (*700 word maximum*):

A New Jersey Quaker named John Collins and an Indiana entrepreneur named Carl Fisher, together in 1913, embarked on an agriculture venture on the edge of a strip island's oceanfront beach and started a bridge across the bay from the City of Miami. On March 26, 1915, Miami Beach, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and Biscayne Bay to the west, was born.

During the Great Depression, the 7.1 square mile island City became a popular resort destination. A new group, predominantly Jewish, came to Miami Beach and built a large number of small hotels with stark modern lines along lower Collins Avenue and Ocean Drive. This building boom helped bring the area out of the Depression and 40 years later would become the world-famous Art Deco District, which includes the internationally renowned South Beach area.

World War II brought thousands to the sand and surf of Miami Beach when the Army Air Corps and the Navy established major training centers. Many of these servicemen made Miami Beach their permanent home after the war. Air-conditioning and transatlantic airline service expanded the City's tourism to year-round.

When Fidel Castro took over Cuba in 1959, Cuban exiles began to pour into the area to start a new life. This influx of immigrants added to the international fabric that threads the Miami Beach community. (Today, Hispanics make up for about 54% of the City's population.)

Although Jackie Gleason was referring to Miami Beach as "the sun and fun capital of the world" from his weekly broadcast, Miami Beach was slowly changing. Old Art Deco structures were used as low-rent housing for the elderly and fell to urban decay during the late 1960s through the mid 1980s.

Fortunately, local historic preservation activists came to the rescue of the pastel-colored Art Deco structures in the mid-'70s. In 1979, the Art Deco District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the first 20<sup>th</sup> century district ever granted such a distinction. A new Miami Beach was emerging.

Miami Beach's Art Deco revival represents one of the greatest historic preservation success stories in America that restored not only the country's largest concentration of Art Deco architecture in the world but also stimulated thousands of new jobs to the area and created an active and respected civic collaboration that still exists today. Affordable housing apartment units for families now share the same palm-shaded streets with single-family homes, high-rise condominiums, restored and newly built hotels, parks, office buildings, restaurants, shops, nightclubs, museums, libraries, schools, hospitals, synagogues and churches, theaters, and outdoor cafes – all with an international accent.

Miami Beach's charm and ability to play host to millions of visitors, thousands of residents, business people, government and media representatives all at once attract event organizers of world-class events to host their

shows in the City: Pavarotti on the Beach, Veterans Day Benefit Concert featuring N'SYNC, MTV Latin Music Awards, Clio Awards, Miami Film Festival, and CBS's All-American Thanksgiving Day Parade.

The younger Miami Beach became known for its trend-setting way of life and its popularity exploded throughout the 1990s. Today, Miami Beach is home to over 88,000 residents who are as diverse as its visitors. The median age of the City's residents dropped to 39 from 65 years old in 1980. The number of residents who are 14 years old or younger increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 11.2% in 1998. And, approximately 45% of households reflect yearly income of less than \$25K per year.

Miami Beach has thrived amidst change and overcome many difficulties because of its civic culture. Recent challenges such as managing growth, maintaining the infrastructure, balancing residential and visitor needs, and facing uncertain economic times have brought the community together to not only find solutions but to partner in the results.

While recent world events tested the City, the community rose to the occasion. A grass-root civic pride campaign was launched by residents and businesses called "My Miami Beach" that celebrates the diversity and assets of the City to both visitors and residents alike.

With the renewed sense of civic pride, the community continues on its journey in making the City of Miami Beach a truly world-class, cosmopolitan, vibrant, tropical, historic community for those that live, work and play here.

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**1 (B). Community Celebration:** Why should your community be selected as an All-America City? Describe what makes your community a great place to live, work, and play. (300 word maximum)

Miami Beach is a unique historic, urban environment; a cultural, entertainment and tourism capital; and, an international center for innovation in culture, recreation and business. An island city of just 7.1 square miles, Miami Beach is no longer just the "sun and fun capital." The Art Deco historic preservation movement revitalized the City. Miami Beach has a vibrant diverse, residential community of 88,000 where people live, work and play together no matter their race, creed, economic status, color, sexual orientation, religion or age.

While Miami Beach has an array of amenities to enjoy year-round from international outdoor cafes, shopping, nightclubs, museums, and theaters to the beach and outdoor and indoor recreational activities, Miami Beach offers more to the community: high achieving public and private schools, religious choices, employment from medical and banking to hospitality and entertainment industries, rising property values, a clean and safe environment, and opportunities for civic engagement.

The City has seen significant changes over the course of the last few years. By involving the many stakeholders and partners in the community to identify problems and solicit guidance to solve the community's struggles, the City now provides better, more efficient and effective services to the public with a primary focus on outstanding customer service.

Miami Beach is very proud of its ability to partner with the community to bring positive change. The City was recognized last year by Participate America, a national organization formed to promote and showcase American democracy and civic participation, with their first-ever President's Award; the only municipality in the country

to have been recognized. The City of Miami Beach has demonstrated throughout its history and even more so today how to include the community and demonstrate to them how important civic involvement is to the democratic process to which all American cities have pledged.

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**1 (C). Community Challenges:** Based upon your community's current status, describe your community's two most pressing challenges.

**Challenge #1:** (200 words maximum)

The City of Miami Beach has undergone significant population and economic changes in the past several years transforming the City from a quiet retirement haven for the elderly and a community largely dependent on seasonal tourism to a much younger, professional, culturally diverse community with a surging, diversified economy that attracts millions of visitors from around the world each year. The City's schools have become overcrowded because of the youth explosion that accompanied the rapid drop in median age from 65 in 1980 to 39 years old today. Because of these dramatic changes, there is a need to provide a varied array of services that benefits the diverse population. In order to ensure that all members of the community are served well and that opportunities are created for civic engagement, the City of Miami Beach needs to continue building community capacity. The City recognizes the need to stimulate civic involvement with its diverse constituents in order to balance their needs, bridge the gaps between the residents, homeowners, business community, tourists and visitors, and embrace common goals that produce results that positively impact the community.

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**Challenge #2:** (200 words maximum)

The revitalization of the Art Deco District and the growth of the entertainment and cultural arts industries have all contributed to the rapid reversal of the severe downward trend Miami Beach experienced in the late 1960s through the mid 1980s. This explosive growth gave birth to a young and vibrant populace and a need to revitalize residential neighborhoods -- many of which had not been touched in more than 50 years. While private development and improvements were well underway, public right-of-ways, infrastructure and facilities were in disrepair. Residents were angered by the decaying condition of their City -- aging parks and youth centers, public facilities, golf courses, residential streets, lighting, landscaping and sidewalks. The community had lost faith, trust and confidence in its government to meet its needs. The community pleaded for government response that would recognize and address their needs, raise the necessary funds together, and develop a capital improvement plan.

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## Part II: Community-Driven Projects

Add lines as needed for your responses

Part II requires descriptions of three collaborative community projects that have significantly affected the community.

The first two projects should be drawn directly from the two community challenges stated above.

The third project should be reflective of what your community is doing for children and youth.

### PROJECT ONE (Challenge #1)

#### 1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

In 2001, Miami Beach created "Neighborhood Services" to provide greater opportunities to citizens for accessing City services and to encourage residents to become more involved in all aspects of the community's governance. The civic engagement process brings agencies and groups together to share resources, network and develop plans for the smooth delivery of services. The main objective of the project is to improve the coordination of neighborhood assets and help residents access and align City resources through training, education, enhanced communication and information sharing, and to assist in the identification and representation of community needs for the continued development and revitalization of the community. By forming a partnership between the City, residents, the business community, and social service organizations and by providing mechanisms to assist everyone in the community, the civic engagement project aims to develop a stronger community structure, mobilize services, empower residents and bring together citizens who would not normally work together for greater understanding of all their needs and to ensure that the highest quality services are delivered.

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#### 2. Describe the relationship between this project and your first challenge, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

The creation of Neighborhood Services focuses and improves public access to City government. By providing direct assistance and outreach to citizens, service delivery enhanced, services with citizen needs were aligned, and involvement and participation increased. The goals and objectives of Neighborhood Services is to build neighborhood capacity, redesign public services and create a sense of community and civic pride.

These objectives are sustained first through technical assistance and outreach provided to local residents. This provides tools for individuals and groups to organize effectively. Ongoing monthly facilitated focus groups assist in identifying gaps in service delivery. These gaps are further identified and analyzed through the City's newly established "Answer Center," a professionally staffed information center which monitors and tracks each service request made to the City to ensure an effective and timely resolution.



The Neighborhood Leadership Academy was created as part of this project to build a cadre of leaders in the community – thus building capacity. This free program educates residents on available services, the government structure, and how to access services through the use of available resources. This project also aims at engaging graduating “leaders” to remain active in the community and encourage ongoing participation in their government. Over 100 residents have graduated and many more are already registered other sessions.

The Volunteer Network provides a comprehensive volunteer service program encouraging public participation, further enhancing a sense of community and utilizing volunteers in a multitude of areas needed in the community and to further connect the community.

Because of the City’s popularity as a homeless destination, the Homeless Outreach Team supports programs to assist homeless individuals and families and those at risk and incorporates the “Continuum of Care” model. This model is a coordinated community-based process comprised of many partners to provide outreach and assessment and appropriate supportive services to those in need.

Neighborhood Services also operates the Log Cabin Training Center, the only vocational training program serving developmentally disabled adults in the community. The program strives to equip participants with job and life skills needed to live more independent satisfying lives.

Through these and many other initiatives, Neighborhood Services is stimulating civic involvement in the community and bridging the gaps between the diverse population to embrace common goals, improve the quality of life, care for the disadvantaged, and produce great results.

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**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

The introduction of Neighborhood Services has aligned a number of City services as the framework for enhanced collaboration. They found that groups and agencies tend to act independently of each other with little collaboration due to a number of reasons but mainly because as the community grows and new resources are introduced there is no “umbrella” agency feeding information to all parties. The program unites various city entities including Community Development and Housing, Community Resource and Outreach, the Answer Center, Elder Affairs, Children’s Affairs, Log Cabin Training Center, Homeless Coordination, and Code Compliance.

Due to the nature of programs developed and implemented, the Neighborhood Services team collaborates with several agencies/organizations throughout the community. The monthly focus groups and the Leadership Academy are interdepartmental collaborations between every department in the City. Both are interactive programs that allow all City departments to interact with the community while affording staff the opportunity to learn about residents’ needs as customers and consumers of City services.

The Volunteer Network is a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Miami and provides mentoring opportunities for children and adults at Miami Beach public schools promoting a healthy self-esteem and positive role models for children. City employees are afforded four hours per month in administrative leave to serve as mentors in this program. The Network also partners with Hands-on-Miami for the Adopt-a-Park program, ECOMB (Environmental Coalition of Miami Beach) for clean-up projects throughout the City, and one of the local hospitals to provide assistance and care with patients.

The Homeless Assistance Program formed a cooperative partnership between the City, the Police Department, Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, Salvation Army and local outreach providers to coordinate an effective referral and placement program.

The Log Cabin Training Center, a training center for the developmentally challenged, expanded course offerings and vocational tracks through collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships with Barry University. And a sheltered work program continues through the Log Cabin Plant Nursery, an independent non-profit agency.

**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

Neighborhood Services serves as the liaison between the City and the community. This role requires an ability to understand the needs of both. In their first year of operation, the Outreach Team and Answer Center successfully responded to and addressed in excess of 18,000 calls and tracked and resolved over 8,000 services requests. This year, they served over 50,000 callers and over 12,000 service requests. These efforts were complimented by 37 focus group meetings with the various neighborhoods.

The homeless program grew exponentially out of the need to reduce the incident of homelessness and number of homeless living in Miami Beach. In Fiscal Year 2001/2002, 888 homeless persons received services from the Office of Homeless Coordination (OHC). These services included food, shelter placement, job placement, assistance with Social Security benefits, as well as other supportive services. Total contacts made by Outreach Teams were approximately 3,200. With the hire of two formerly homeless individuals, OHC has increased staffing to provided services to 343 homeless persons and have made over 1,028 contacts in the first quarter of fiscal year 2002/2003. The OHC projects that over 1,300 homeless persons will receive services and 5,000 contacts will be made. Of the 1,300 that receive services 300 will be placed in housing (emergency, transitional or permanent). This 300 figure reflects an average of 25 placements per month.

The Volunteer Network joined non-profit agencies, youth groups, and local schools including about 750 individuals to work on eight identified environmental and civic projects throughout the City in its initial year.

The Log Cabin, in the past year of operation, reduced the staff/client ratio from 1:10 to 1:7, while reducing the City's funding commitment through a collaborative partnership with Barry University. Furthermore, course offerings and vocational tracks were expanded while experiencing this reduction and are currently working on increased summer and community programs. Forty-nine clients were served in three different programs.

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**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

Robert C. Middaugh, Assistant City Manager, 305-673-7010, robertmiddaugh@miamibeachfl.gov

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## PROJECT TWO (Challenge #2)

### 1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

“Planned Progress” began as a coalition, spearheaded by the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with concerned residents, community organizations, and the City government, to obtain input and identify the improvements that the community felt were needed. After an aggressive “My Neighborhood Now” grass-roots campaign and extensive community meetings, residents agreed to pass general obligation bonds so that the improvements would become possible. To ensure the success of this initiative and to sway skeptics critical of government spending, a citizen’s committee was developed to scrutinize all expenditures and provide oversight for the duration of the funded work. The \$92 million dollars of GO Bond-funded “Planned Progress” capital improvements are now being implemented in each of the City’s 13 separate neighborhoods. Layered on these funds was the passage of Stormwater and Water Bonds as well as grants and other funding sources which now account for approximately \$400 million in funding and 117 separate construction projects, all to be completed in the next few years. Residents continue to take part in the process every step of the way.

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### 2. Describe the relationship between this project and your second challenge, the project’s history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

Early in the planning process it became clear that if this amount of new construction was to occur, a coordination effort needed to be created to track projects, develop concept plans, create community consensus, sequence projects and construct improvements in a manner that minimizes construction impacts, and enables day-to-day activities to continue, and managed the expectations from the community. The Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Office was established in 2001 and staffed with a director, engineers, planners, construction managers, program managers and a community information manager.

Each individual “Planned Progress” project is brought to the community for consensus. By creating a series of communication efforts and a process for participation for the Community Design Workshops, the CIP ensures that all residents are aware of the opportunities to participate and provide input. When consensus is reached on planned improvements, a Basis of Design Report (BODR) is prepared by the consultants which serves as the master plan from which construction documents will ultimately be prepared. This document is approved by the Oversight Committee made up of residents and then the full City Commission through a public review process.

Residents are encouraged to track the “Planned Progress” of their neighborhood via the Internet, devoted exclusively to these projects, or by calling the community information manager. To further prepare residents for this process, a “Planned Progress” video runs along with other CIP programs on the City’s cable television station. All information is available in both Spanish and English to ensure that all residents are kept fully informed.

Empowerng the community as part of the process has created a celebratory and positive relationship throughout the process and especially when their “Planned Progress” projects are completed.

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**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

The planned progress team works closely with Homeowner's Associations and area residents to make sure that proposed improvements are built on consensus. CIP staff meet in the field with neighborhood representatives, architects and engineers as needed. When construction documents reach 60% completion, and again at 90% completion, additional community design review meetings are held. In addition to meeting with residents, the team actively engages other city departments, county and state departments to make sure they are all advised of the work and plan. All other work from these agencies are coordinated with the "Planned Progress" approach too.

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**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

To date, all 13 neighborhoods are actively engaged in the "Planned Progress" of their communities. Seven different neighborhoods are now in the construction design phase, having built consensus and having had their Basis of Design Reports approved by the City Commission. The Miami Beach Golf Club, the brand new public world-class golf course has just been completed and its golf clubhouse is under construction, the second municipal course is in design, two youth centers are very close to completion, all but three of the City's 32 parks have been improved, a regional library is under construction, two fire stations are in design, a municipal pool and water play area has been completed, a beachfront walkway is under construction, the Bass Museum of Art expansion has been completed, and several significant streetscape/infrastructure projects have been completed in commercial corridors. Most importantly, residents were involved in every step of the way and the general consensus from the community is that they are very pleased with all the beautiful new additions to the community.

It is important to note that the private sector has matched this public sector commitment by investing in the City of Miami Beach as never before. In a time of uncertainty in the world, the economy of the City of Miami Beach continues to be fiscally strong, with steady growth and investment due to the very carefully conceived and implemented "Planned Progress" approach.

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**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

Timothy Hemstreet, Director, Capital Improvement Program, 305-673-6431, [timhemstreet@miamibeachfl.gov](mailto:timhemstreet@miamibeachfl.gov)

## PROJECT THREE

As a commitment to America's Promise, the National Civic League has issued the Youth Initiative Challenge. We ask that at least one project from each All-America City applicant document ways in which the lives of children and youth have been tangibly improved.

### 1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

The Children's Affairs Office was created to promote a positive and healthy environment for children and families by serving as a catalyst for improving children's emotional, physical, social, and educational outlooks. The Office provides a variety of services and initiatives including the "Neighborhoods First Support Team," a multi-faceted effort to address truancy, community cohesion and other issues while networking community resources to improve service delivery to youth; the Teen Job Corps which provides employment to at-risk youth in the community; and the Truancy Intervention Project (TIP) which is a collaborative effort by the City, the public schools, the County, the State Attorney's Office and community-based agencies to identify and provide early intervention services to youth at-risk of school failure and truancy.

TIP is activated when a school official notes that a student has five or more unexcused absences. The school refers the client to the City which, in turn, schedules a home visit. During the home visit, the family and student are assessed to determine the causes of the absences and whether or not the student is performing at grade level. As appropriate, the student is then connected to community-based providers that can address his medical, dental, transportation, academic, counseling, aftercare, housing and economic needs. Once connected to the provider, the City provides follow-up to ensure that school attendance improves and is sustained.

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### 2. Describe the relationship between this project and the challenge it is addressing, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

TIP serves multiple purposes: (1) Connecting at-risk youth with community-based providers; (2) Fostering an improved process for collaboration among providers at the onset of risk; (3) Increasing dialogue and engagement between the community-at-large, community providers and the City through home, school and community-based settings; (4) Improving student attendance and reducing academic failure; and (5) Providing early intervention to needed residents thereby reducing the cost of intervention, increasing the likelihood of success and improving the quality of life of our community.

TIP is a conduit to address capacity-building among agency providers while encouraging intervention at its earliest stage so as to ensure success and reduce the cost of services in human and financial terms.

TIP's initial funding was a three-year grant by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The grant enabled the hiring and training of outreach workers, the development of a comprehensive needs and resource assessment, community workshops with citizens and providers to discuss collaborations and processes, and the implementation of the first two years of a five-year action plan.

**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

TIP evolved through a joint recognition by the City, county school officials, and the State Attorney's Office that truancy often leads to juvenile delinquency. Through a Grand Jury probe, the State Attorney provided compelling statistics demonstrating this correlation while also highlighting the absence of coordinated intervention services.

School officials and the State Attorney began by conducting a series of increasingly involved meetings between school officials, families and local law enforcement. While raising awareness and starting a dialogue, these meetings failed to address the causes for the absences or provide intervention services. The City stepped in by providing outreach teams that visited homes and began to identify the reasons for school absences.

As home visits were conducted and specific needs found, the City worked with community providers to identify resources that could be directed to meet these needs. For example, it was found that a significant amount of students who missed school cited "asthma" as their excuse. In conjunction with Miami Beach Community Health Center (the City's primary health provider for the economically disadvantaged) and Miami Jackson Medical Center (the County's largest hospital), several public workshops on asthma and its management were presented in English and Spanish with special invitations being sent to families via TIP. In order to encourage attendance, dinner was provided by the City, transportation tokens were provided by the county's transit agency, and the network of community providers disseminated invitations to the events.

When it began in 1999/2000, less than 10 community agencies were engaged in addressing the needs of these families. By 2000/2001, almost 60 community providers were being linked to these families. Services included: dental/medical service, counseling, job training/ placement, rent assistance, emergency housing, parenting skills, utility assistance, preventive health management (including stress, diabetes, and hypertension), immigration/legal services, food, aftercare, tutoring and more.

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**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

TIP increased collaboration, accessibility to community providers, and established ongoing outreach efforts. In less than three years, TIP increased the number of agencies providing services to these families from less than 10 to more than 60 while creating at least one monthly public workshop alternately sponsored by these agencies. An additional outgrowth of this effort created the Community Resource Directory and a weekly ResourceWire, connecting agencies to each other and available grants and resources.

This effort established community service projects at least once a month in which youth identified, organized and effectuated a variety of environmental, social and civic projects including a citywide salute to the fallen heroes of 9/11. By engaging and being part of the solution, youth are empowered to take active, leadership roles to address community needs.

TIP increased school attendance through intervention that connected needy families and students with services that addressed the specific cause of their hardships. In 1999/2000, students were referred with an average of 21.46 absences. After intervention, students averaged 4.8 absences through the remainder of the school year. In 2001/2002, students were referred with an average of 12.6 absences. After intervention, students averaged 4.55 absences through the remainder of the school year. Regardless of when the intervention was made, the number of absences took a subsequent and significant drop after intervention. Intervention was tailored to the specific needs of the student and family. This meant engaging a multitude of agencies that could address transportation, health, aftercare, counseling, legal, housing and other needs and directing them to the specific individual or family in need of services.

While TIP sought to reduce school absenteeism, it also enabled families in need to access a variety of services that would otherwise go unmet because of their isolation or detachment from the community and its providers.

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**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

Maria Ruiz, Director, Office of Children's Affairs, 305/673-7491, [mariaruiz@miamibeachfl.gov](mailto:mariaruiz@miamibeachfl.gov)

## **Part III**

### **Civic Infrastructure**

Describe your community. Using the four major sections of the National Civic League's *The Civic Index, Second Edition* (see [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org) for more information), examine your community's civic infrastructure and civic capacity and describe how your community *lives* each of the answers to each of the following questions. Please include real examples of how your community has demonstrated its strengths and faced its challenges. The roman numerals correspond to parts of *The Civic Index, Second Edition*. Also see the application instructions for this section.

Add lines as needed for your responses

#### **I. What is our community vision for the future? (300 word maximum)**

The City of Miami Beach is committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work, and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community.

With input from our community (community organizations, residents, businesses, and employees), the City developed a five-year vision for Miami Beach. We are working to make this vision a reality and believe that through our efforts, Miami Beach will be: cleaner and safer; more beautiful and vibrant; a mature and stable residential community with well-improved infrastructure; a unique urban and historic environment; a cultural, entertainment, tourism capital; and an international center for innovation in culture, recreation and business.

In order to reach our vision, we are focusing efforts on the following priority areas: (1) Our Capital Improvement Program is continuing initiatives to improve the City's infrastructure (water/sewer, stormwater, streetscapes), public facilities, parks, beaches, golf courses and public safety equipment; (2) We are developing plans and economic development strategies to ensure that appropriate, coherent and sustainable growth occurs in the City without adversely impacting the unique character of our community and our residential neighborhoods; (3) Focusing on organizational development and leadership to ensure that our workforce is prepared to lead, serve and address the City's challenges; (4) Delivering a neighborhood services focus which embraces multi-departmental cooperation to enhance service delivery with quality of life issues as a priority for all who live, work and play here; and (5) implementing e-government solutions that provide electronic access to City services and information 24 hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week and that facilitate citizen access and interaction with their government.

#### **II (a). What is the extent and nature of citizen participation in community improvement efforts? (300 word maximum)**

The City of Miami Beach is very inclusive in the decision-making process with its citizens. Resident participation is extensive and is achieved through the over 25 diverse City boards and committees, evaluation committees, hundreds of neighborhood meetings, and many programs that provide additional information on all the services the City provides to the community.



The City created Neighborhood Services to improve public access to City government, enhance service delivery from all departments, align services with citizen needs, and increase involvement and participation by providing direct assistance and outreach to citizens. This area is responsible for ensuring that residents receive prompt, responsive and courteous service that meets or exceeds their needs and addresses neighborhood concerns. The goals and objectives of this area are to build neighborhood capacity, redesign public services, enhance the sense of community, and provide residents with an opportunity to better participate and connect with their government.

By building neighborhood capacity, residents become more knowledgeable about how government works and their input is vital in helping to meet their community's needs. Their energy and creativity combined with other public and private resources help create a diverse group working together in each of our 13 diverse neighborhoods to mobilize new assets and generate positive changes affecting the community's quality of life..

By redesigning public services, residents who live and/or work in a neighborhood are able to prioritize their needs. The Neighborhood Services Department gives residents a forum where unique neighborhood needs can be voiced to public officials and government staff. These dialogues lead to the reexamination of budget priorities and new methods of public service delivery. Neighborhood revitalization ultimately depends on a sense of neighborhood identity and a commitment by all residents to make their neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play.

**II (b). What role does government play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

The City believes that it is their responsibility to supply the leadership and vision necessary to move ideas into tangibles, unfunded into funded initiatives, create catalysts for social change, assist in educating the public, building consensus for all sorts of public improvements, and delivering results that positively impact all who live, work and play there.

The City of Miami Beach works very closely with its citizens in developing public policy. From a myriad of citizen task forces to standing citizen committees and oversight boards, Miami Beach reflects the diverse and sometimes disparate interests of its residents. In fact, it is the melding of these ideas that created its public agenda and has given the City its vitality and energy.

In addition to the several initiatives implemented to engage citizens and connect them with government, the City interacts with a variety of very vocal civic and business organizations representing three Chambers of Commerce, many homeowner's associations, and non-profit and community-based organizations.

One example is the \$92 million General Obligation Bond referendum brought forth by a coalition of residents and community associations who campaigned for underground and right-of-way improvements in residential neighborhoods throughout the City. Calling itself "My Neighborhood Now," this coalition worked closely with the City to encourage residents to vote for the concept of taxing themselves to make these overdue but unfunded improvements. The Bond issue passed in November 1999 and improvement projects are currently underway. The City has continued the civic engagement of the community throughout its progress by seeking their participation in decisions for major steps of project development. When completed this Bond Issue will have invested millions of dollars in above and below ground improvements in each of the city's 13 neighborhoods – many of which have had no significant upgrading in 50 years – but most of all; built a civic bond with the community and its members.

**II (c). What roles do non-profits play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

The City of Miami Beach partners with many non-profit organizations in the community to provide a number of public services, including affordable housing opportunities, rehabilitation of both residential and commercial properties and economic development, as well as many other programs beyond the scope of the traditional City services provided.

The Miami Beach Community Development Corporation is the City's community-based partner located in the south end of the city that works to create home ownership opportunities for low and moderate-income residents citywide. The North Beach Development Corporation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to create additional economic development opportunities in the North Beach area. The agency has worked to provide neighborhood revitalization through its commercial façade enhancement program, thus creating visual improvements which complement City infrastructure and beautification projects.

The City's community-based partners also include UNIDAD/Hispanic Community Center, a social services referral and information agency for residents. This program uses elderly volunteers to staff many activities, as well as referring these elders for other non-profits and small businesses. In addition, UNIDAD has a "one stop job shop" that serves people who have been job displaced or are seeking career planning and placement.

The City partners with the Miami Beach Design Preservation League. This group's mission is the preservation of historic buildings, and in addition, they played a prominent role in the economic and neighborhood revitalization of the historic Art Deco district.

In addition, the U.S. Community Development Block Grant program has been funding Miami Beach for nearly 30 years which allows the City to partner with many local agencies to provide broad-based community services to meet the physical, economic, and social needs of the City and its residents: from hot meals for the elderly to neighborhood street improvements, from childcare services to vocational tuition waivers.

**II (d). What roles do businesses play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

Businesses contribute to the decision-making process at all levels. They participate, along with residents and other organizations, through representation on various City boards and committees, such as the Community Relations Board, Planning Board, Design Review Board, Production Industry Council, Visitor and Convention Authority, and many others. Businesses also participate in various merchant associations and business districts, which maintain constant and consistent communication with the the City.

The most important role that businesses play is their support of the local economy, by creating jobs and employment opportunities for the residents, by providing goods and services to the residents and visitors in the most convenient method possible, and by contributing financially to the economic well-being of the City, through payroll, infusion of capital from customers, and though substantial support of municipal activities due to the recent phenomenal increases in local real estate values which have resulted in higher tax revenues to the City, although the tax rate continues to decline. This has enabled the City to enhance its recreational amenities, and attract quality events to the area for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

The private sector has been instrumental in developing and implementing visions throughout the City that have resulted in significant revitalization and redevelopment, providing new, renovated and updated housing units, retail space parking facilities, opportunities for entrepreneurship, contributing to a cleaner, safer city with a high quality of life for all who live, work and play there.

**III (a). How does our community recognize and celebrate its diversity? (300 word maximum)**

From cultural events to diversity forums, Miami Beach takes great pride in recognizing and celebrating its diverse community. The City is home to a population of many different ethnic groups and people of different sexual orientations and plays host to an even larger diverse population of international visitors who visit the City from all over the world.

Miami Beach is the cultural arts playground of South Florida because of our many diverse and international events held in its cultural institutions and throughout the City's public facilities and parks. Sponsoring and hosting many special events throughout the year, celebrate the diverse groups. They include ArtsBeach 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays, the City's free monthly multicultural arts night where visual and performing arts groups showcase their work throughout the City in a display of creative energy that includes music, dance, theater, cinema, readings, art exhibits, guided tours, workshops, lectures, story-telling, neighborhood fairs, yoga, and other free activities; White Party, a gay & lesbian fundraiser for AIDS Awareness; Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations; community award programs; Latin and African-American film festivals; Black History Month celebrations; and an annual Fourth of July concert that includes an annual naturalization ceremony of new youth citizens born in other countries.

Diversity is displayed throughout the way the City conducts business as well. The diverse boards and committees including the Hispanic Affairs Committee, Community Relations Board, Sister Cities Council, Commission on the Status of Women, Cultural Arts Council, and Barrier Free Environment Committee (which deals with ADA issues) are composed of volunteers from the community and make recommendations to the City on several issues.

Public forums to discuss community relations amongst the diverse community are held annually. The needs of the Hispanic community are recognized daily by having all public information materials available in Spanish, including the City's website.. The City has an ADA plan that addresses different issues including providing interpretation services for the hearing impaired at all Commission meetings.

The City has also made great strides in hiring a diverse workforce: 39% - Hispanic, 39% - white, 20% - black, and 2% - other. Employees are invited to celebrate diversity through celebrations of food, art and music during Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. In addition, all employees are required to attend a diversity workshop when they are hired to get a better understanding and appreciation of its differences throughout the workplace and community.

**III (b). How does our community work with neighboring communities to address shared challenges? Is there a shared regional vision? (300 word maximum)**

The City of Miami Beach is in constant communication with neighboring communities, due to the various shared challenges and opportunities that do not take into account local municipal boundaries. Miami Beach is the primary economic engine of the tourism economy in South Florida. The Council of Coastal Mayors, chaired by the Miami Beach Mayor, is comprised of all the coastal mayors in the County and continuously meets to work on issues of mutual concern, including beach renourishment, land use and enhancement projects. The City recognizes that it is an integral part of the urban core of Greater Miami-Dade County, which stretches from the South Beach portion of Miami Beach, across Biscayne Bay and through Downtown Miami to East Little Havana all the way down south to Homestead near the Florida Keys. The City works with various agencies at the County, State and Federal level to ensure continuity of functions that impact the local and surrounding communities.

Miami Beach is a regional resource, for all of South Florida's residents and visitors during all times of the year, day and night. Schools, transportation, major events, community and economic development and tourism efforts are addressed on both a local and regional level, and constant interaction occurs between Miami Beach and most of the cities and other government agencies in the County, as well as the region's chambers of commerce, convention and tourism organizations, housing and social service organizations and transportation authorities.

**IV. How does your community strengthen its ability to solve problems? (300 word maximum)**

The City's mission is to provide excellent public service and safety to all who live, work, and play in their vibrant, tropical, historic community. They believe that the best way to accomplish their mission is by partnering with its residents and businesses to ensure that services meet their needs. Solving problems needs to be a collaborative process in order to have successful outcomes. Providing the community with opportunities to voice their concerns is important. During Commission meetings, time is scheduled for community members to directly speak to the Mayor, Commissioners and members of the Administration to make them aware of issues they feel are important. The "Mayor on the Move" series takes the Mayor, Commissioners and City administrative staff into the community every month to meet with residents throughout the 13 neighborhoods in the City. This provides them with an opportunity to partner with residents to come up with creative, collaborative solutions to solve problems. The Neighborhood Services Department is charged with developing and implementing programs that will enhance our residents' knowledge of city government services. Another avenue that the City developed is a series of focus groups in its various diverse neighborhoods. These groups will bring together 10 to 15 residents for a face-to-face discussion of a particular topic to address and evaluate service delivery issues, needs and gaps and test new concepts or services, giving residents yet another opportunity to participate in community improvement efforts. The new Answer Center was created to give residents a more efficient way to communicate with us. The Neighborhood Leadership Academy offers residents an opportunity to learn more about the services and resources available to them by participating in a "leadership" class while at the same time providing City staff with an opportunity to learn about residents' needs. In summary, Miami Beach believes that by connecting its residents with their government, they become the fabric of what makes the community so vibrant and a place residents are proud to call home.

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*End of Application*

See **[www.ncl.org/aac/](http://www.ncl.org/aac/)** or the application instructions for detailed application instructions and sample applications from previous All-America City Winners.